

The Droop Mountain Battle

(A paper prepared by John D. Sutton)

After the country was freed from Indian invasions and Virginia became established, the people began to look more to their financial affairs and public interests. It was not long until those west of the Alleghenys became jealous of their eastern brethren. Tobacco was the money crop of the east, raised by slave labor, whilst those west of the mountains depended for many years upon furs and ginseng as their principal commodity in trade. And as it has been from the beginning of time taxation began to be agitated. The great body of the east escaped very largely from their equal share of the burden, but controlled very largely the political affairs of the state. The western portion of the state was powerless. Their only relief was in separation. The Civil War afforded them that opportunity; hence when the war came on, 32,000 of the young men of Western Virginia joined the Union forces. Though they were living in a slave state the great majority refused to answer the call of Virginia, and when the 20th of June, 1863, came, and West Virginia was admitted as a state into the union, the defenders of the new state were determined to sustain and defend the state at whatever cost of blood and treasure. The south was as fully determined to retain the territory of the state, and to prevent the rending of the state—a state for which we all have the most profound love and respect. But a sacrifice had to be made and the battle was joined—a battle of separation. The best blood of Virginia and West Virginia, men who had met on many bloody battlefields prior to the great Battle of Droop Mountain, soldiers inured to hardship and dangers, not soldiers of fortune, not soldiers for spoil, but men in whose breasts was a living principle, a principle implanted in their youth by their fathers. At a distance, it would look like common consent that the forces were to be assembled for a final test of strength. General Averell, with a very formidable force, left Beverly on November 1st, to find the enemy and give battle wherever he might be found. General Wm. L. Jackson, commanding a brigade and several other units, battalions and companies, was joined by General Echols on the morning of the 6th by a splendid brigade of fighting men. General Averell encountered the Confederates in force near Mill Point on the morning of the 5th and drove them to the foot of Droop Mountain, and there

General Skeen was the lieutenant of the company. He appeared to be the purchasing agent of the County Court, as he paid the bills for the army and took receipts therefor. Under date of June 25, 1861, he rendered an itemized account under expenses incurred on march of "Pocahontas Rescues," amounting to \$68.68. It was allowed and \$25 paid on account. He notes a balance of \$43.68 due him, and I doubt if it was ever paid to him.

The big item of expense was \$37.42 for shoes—nineteen pairs bought on May 23, at Philippl, from J. P. Thompson. The other items include bacon, tallow, flour, meal, horse feed, gloves, hats, cotton cloth, calico, socks, shirts, blankets and whatnot.

On May 20, at J. W. Marshall's store he bought a pair of gloves for Captain Stofer at 25 cents and six combs for privates for \$1.00. Also 2 cravats, \$1; 2 flannel shirts, \$2; and 2 more pair gloves 50 cents.

On May 22, at Beverly, from A & B Crawford, two hats for \$3.25. From J. Burket, also at Beverly, pair of shoes at \$2 and 2 pairs socks 30 cents. On the same date from E. B. Bucher 12 1-2 pounds of tallow for \$1.25 and 52 1-2 pounds of bacon at 14c, \$8.35.

On May 24, Elder Douglas was paid \$4.33 for supper, lodging and breakfast for 13 persons.

On May 25, \$2.50 is paid Jno. B. Curin for Gilham tactics.

On May 17, Captain Stofer certifies that an account of Wm. H. Slanker for 9 yards of calico, 1 1-2 yards of bleach cotton, 8 3-4 yards of cotton drilling and one made shirt, in all \$4.37 1-2 is correct and necessary for the use of said company.

Mr Skeen started off fine to keep a daily report on the progress of the "Pocahontas Rescues" but I guess he got too busy, for after three days, he quits in the middle of a page.

In speaking of this march, the old soldiers referred to it as the "Tin Cup Campaign." A cup was all the equipment furnished them. They provided their own arms.

The cavalry referred to was Captain Andrew McNeel's Company. On their return from Philippl, this company was disbanded and the men joined the 11th Virginia—Bath Squadron—and Captain Wm L. McNeel's and Captain J. W. Marshall's companies, 19th Virginia Cavalry.

On the return of the Pocahontas Rescues, the company was disbanded and the men with a number of additions made up company I, 25th Virginia Infantry. J. H. McLaughlin was elected first lieutenant.

This company was engaged in the following battles: Philippl, McDowell, Winchester, Cross Keys, Port Republic, Seven Days, Fight around Richmond, Slaughter Mountain, Second Manasses, Brestow Station, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Second Winchester, Gettysburg, Mine Run, and the Wilderness. At the Wilderness the 25th was captured; the Pocahontas Rescues and replacements had been reduced to seventeen men; of this seventeen, eleven lived through the war, six dying in prison.

The last member of Company I, to pass over that I know of was Captain J. W. Mathews, of Anthonys Creek, who died about twelve years ago.

Captain Stofer came from the Valley of Virginia. He was a lawyer, and he served as commonwealth's attorney for Pocahontas a number of terms. He had been a soldier in the Mexican war, and fought in a number of battles. My recollection is that Captain Stofer was not wounded in the war between the states until the battle of Cross Keys when he fell with five bullet holes in him. Every one of these wounds was considered mortal, but he recovered and survived the war some twenty years. As a child, I remember him as a friendly,

courtly gentleman, known in his wide circle of friends as the "Count."

General William Skeene served as clerk of both the county and circuit courts. He was succeeded just before the war by the late William Curry. He was a resident attorney at Huntersville for many years. He was elected Attorney General of the State of Virginia.

I certainly do wish that General Skeene had written up the "Tin Cup Campaign" day by day, instead of quitting off on the record the evening of the third day.

You have got to hand it to the General that he was a considerable of a manager to march an army of fifty-six men some ninety miles, and back on a campaign of several weeks, at a cost to Pocahontas County of only \$68.68.

After the war Confederate soldiers were deprived of the rights of citizenship by their inability to take the test oath. Before a man could vote, hold office, practice law, etc., he must swear that he had not aided or abetted the Confederacy. This did not phase Captain Stofer a bit. At the first opportunity he presented himself at the bar as a practicing attorney, took the oath and resumed his law work where he left off after four years service in the army of the Confederate States of America. The

grand jury indicted him for perjury, and he appealed to the Supreme Court, where the case dragged along for years. I presume that the case against the Captain just naturally went by the board when the new state went democratic in 1870, a new constitution adopted and the rights of the southern sympathizers restored. I will look that case up some day when I have the time. I have the impression that Count Stofer was defended by Spencer Dayton, a native of New England, father of the late Judge A. G. Dayton, of Philippl, United States District Judge. I do know that Mr Dayton successfully defended the numerous Confederate soldiers who were indicted for murder after the war, in this county.

My friend, the late Hugh P. McLaughlin, always took delight in relating his experiences as a boy on this "Tin Cup Campaign." Some where along the road to Philippl they came to a farm where there was a mowing machine with its tongue propped up, in a shed. Few of them had ever seen a mower, and word was passed down the ranks that it was a cannon. One boy took a good look at it, and remarked on the length of the ramrod!

Pocahontas Times

1/16/41

48
Mrs. Rella F. Yeager
Juanita S. Dilley

*Big International - Super - 1 -
Camp Price, West Virginia
Droop Mountain
State Park*

DROOP MT. STATE PARK

On top of picturesque Droop Mountain, about four miles from the little town of Hillsboro, in West Virginia, CCC Camp Price, Co. 2,598 have done some wonderful work on the State Park.

It was on this site that the greatest battle of the Civil War in West Virginia was fought about 72 years ago. It is said that the only brass cannon that this part of the confederate army had lies buried in a swamp within a stone's throw of the camp. Although 72 years have elapsed since the great battle, many signs and memoirs of it are left. While rambling through the woods one may find the old rock breastworks which were used by the Confederate and Union soldiers alike.

About three miles from the camp there is a large cave in which soldiers manufactured gun powder. It is now known as "Saltpetre Cave." Occasionally old grave markers are found.

Although there are signs posted along Route 219 showing the position of the great battlefield, it has not yet received much attention from tourists because of the seemingly impossibility of exploration, as not much can be seen from the highway. This is an ideal place for picnic's, as the CCC boys have built chimneys for camp cooking, and seats and tables, etc. and have made the site of the battle one of the better known parks in West Virginia. Roads and trails have been built that lead to views that are entrancing.

Visitors are always welcome.

Pocahontas Co.
Juanita S. Dilley
Pocahontas Co.
Chapter 4, section 4b-3

BATTLE OF BARTOW - October 3, 1861

There were three battles known as the battles of the Greenbrier Ford, which took place at Travelers Repose, now known as Bartow. One was October 3, 1861, one Oct. 31, 1861, the other Dec. 12, 1861. Since the first of these battles, the one of October 3, was the biggest one, that is the one we shall consider in this report.

The first year of the war saw five battles in the Upper Tract, as upper Pocahontas was usually called at that time. The reason being that the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike crossed the Greenbrier Valley at this place and it was one of the most important thoroughfares in the nation at the outbreak of the Civil War. It was well served by stage coach lines and it formed a favorite route for persons from the middle west who wished to go to Washington and other eastern points.

The political significance of Western Virginia seceding from Virginia made the passage of the Allegheney the most important spots to the military operations on both sides.

The Federal army had already occupied Tygarts Valley in Randolph, and the Confederates hurried armies into the Greenbrier Valley in Pocahontas. Their foremost post was at Travelers Repose. The camp was called Camp Bartow in honor of Col Francis S. Bartow of the 7th Georgia Regiment who was killed in the battle of Bull Run in July 1861. The camp was commanded by Gen. H. R. Jackson of Georgia, who no doubt named it in honor of his friend.

Since the building of a small town on this old battle field, the postoffice once known as Travelers Repose was changed to Bartow.

The Federal Army was camped at White's Top of Shavers Cheat at an elevation of about 4,200 feet. About 20 miles east of them on the top of the main Allegheny was camped the Confederates at an elevation of about 4,100 feet. The new soldiers were trained in sight of each other on these high tops. They lay there for months in sight of each other, and during that time had had but one skirmish. That was when the Confederates had attempted to cross Cheat at night and had gotten lost.